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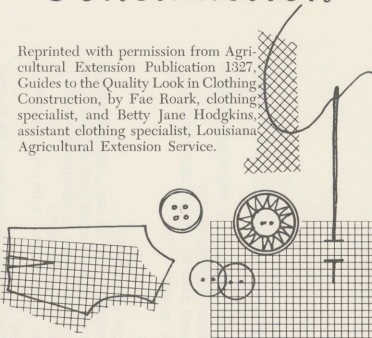
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Guides to the Quality Look in Clothing Construction

Reprinted with permission from Agricultural Extension Publication 1327, *Guides to the Quality Look in Clothing Construction*, by Fae Roark, clothing specialist, and Betty Jane Hodgkins, assistant clothing specialist, Louisiana Agricultural Extension Service.



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. John T. Stone, Dean of Extension, South Dakota State University, Brookings.

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Guides to the Quality Look in Clothing Construction

Do you want a quality look in the garment you make?

To get the quality look, you will have to make your own decisions regarding the best methods to use for different construction problems and with different fabrics.

Your pattern instructions are given as a guide, but you may know a better method for your particular need. Remember, there is a reason why one method is better than another.

Consider the "why" when you make your choice.

Will that choice give the result you desire?

Don't Sew Any More Than Is Necessary to Give You These Three Things:

A GOOD APPEARANCE (the outside of garment is what is seen).

DURABILITY (seams must last the lifetime of garment).

A GOOD FIT (of parts together).

GUIDES TO HELP YOU MAKE DECISIONS:

Cutting

Straighten fabric grainline.

Accurately place pattern on grain or design.

Accurately cut along pattern edge.

Interfacing should:

Match fabric in color, as nearly as possible.

Be no heavier (sometimes lighter weight) than fabric of garment.

Be pre-shrunk.

Have "give" for garment to move as body moves. (Woven fabrics have more "give" than non-woven.)

React to laundry or dry cleaning processes the same as fabric used with. (Should be washable, if garment is to be washed.) Be placed next to top side of garment (not to facing) — usually.

Stitching

Use a balanced tension (top and bottom).

Thread should match in color and size.

Adjust stitch length for fabric used.

Topstitching should be slightly shorter than for underneath, unless for decoration.

Use extra short stitches for added strength.

Double stitch in same stitching line when extra strength is needed.

Staystitching (for better fit of parts together)

Staystitch $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from outer edge (or on seamline) on curved or bias seams and on zipper side of waist.

For neckline, staystitch in seamline — $\frac{5}{8}$ inch from outer edge.

Firm, crease resistant fabric may need staystitching only at neck, other deep curves, and on zipper side of skirt.

Darts

Bust darts extend toward fullest part of bust and are usually pressed downward.

Waistline darts usually turn toward center front and center back.

Darts taper gradually to point.

Reinforce with short machine stitches before making deep clips in darts at waistline of dress without a seam at waistline.

Seams

Fit parts together accurately.

Make seams accurate width, usually $\frac{5}{8}$ inch unless pattern designates otherwise.

Plain seams are satisfactory for most firmly woven fabrics.

Pinked, edgestitched, machine overcast, or other suitable finishes, may be necessary depending on how much the fabric frays.

French seams may be used on very sheer fabrics.

Double stitch or topstitch seat and crotch of pants when plain seams are used.

Collar

"Favor" upper collar to keep underside from "peeping."

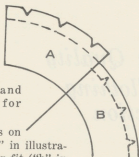
Shorten stitches around corners and curves to allow for closer trimming.

Cut small notches on outward curve ("a" in illustration) for smoother fit ("b" in illustration).

Grade seams, leaving side longer next to upper collar.

Understitch outer seamline to keep under collar from "peeping."

May attach to garment with fitted facing or bias strip.



Facings

Clean finish (or other appropriate finish) outer edge as needed.

Clip inside curve ("a" in illustration). Seam allowance will spread and lie smoothly when seam is turned back ("b" in illustration).

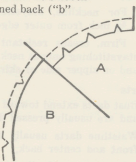
Understitch seamline so facing won't "peep."

If machine stitching will be exposed, attach outer edge of a bias facing by hand.

Attach outer edge of shaped facing at construction points only (shoulder and other seams).

May be completely attached to lining, if garment is underlined.

Attach outer edges of interfacing loosely to garment facing — using long stitches (hand or machine) — to prevent "wadding" during laundry or cleaning.



Sleeves

Set-in sleeves.

Should have no excess fullness across top (except gathered sleeve).

"Ease in" fullness (off-grain stitching may help).

Hem, face, or attach cuff after underarm seam is made.

Set sleeve in after underarm seams of sleeve and waist are sewed.

Doublestitch (in same seamline) underarm seam from notch to notch (for strength).

WARNING: Do not trim underarm seam *too close* (will "wear" and fray).

Clip *only bodice part* of underarm seamline, *only* if necessary for freedom of movement.

Kimono type sleeve.

Reinforce underarm seam along curve with narrow selvage strip, other straight strip or straight tape.

Waistline

Seam should be held firm.

May double stitch in same seamline if fabric is very firm and not much "give."

Use staypiece appropriate to fabric:

Selvage, other straight strip or straight tape (no wider than seam)

grosgrain ribbon (not over 1 inch wide)

Evenly distribute skirt ease onto staypiece.

Closures

Closures (plackets or zippers) should be as inconspicuous as possible.

Zippers should be well covered by lap.

Machine stitching should be even width from edge of zipper lap.

May taper slightly at top for tab.

Zipper may be put in by hand for "better" garments. (Hand stitching is not as durable as machine.)

Buttonholes may be bound, hand or machine worked—as suited to garment.

Should be firm (not frayed).

Bound buttonholes should have square corners and piping an even width.

Covered buttons should be free of wrinkles.

One button should be placed at fullest part of bust to avoid gaping unless it interferes with design of garment.

Most buttons need a shank for ease in fastening.

Belts

Cover belting entirely (top and underside).

Keep grainline straight (belts usually cut on lengthwise grain).

Worked eyelets usually best (machine, hand

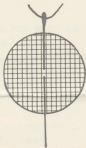
— or hand-overcast metal eyelets that are put on upside down).

Hems

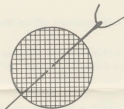
Should be inconspicuous on top side of garment.

Keep stitches loose (not pulled tight).

Keep stitches straight with grain — pass needle straight under 1 or 2 threads — not diagonally across threads.



THIS



NOT THIS

Stitches should not be over $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart.

No long threads exposed on underside to hang, snag — or wear out quickly (conceal between hem and garment).

Finish edge in manner suitable for garment fabric.

Turned under and edgestitched.

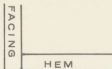
Tape (should be as durable as garment).

One or two rows of machine stitching and edge pinked if necessary.

No edge finish necessary for some fabrics such as double knits, flannels, etc.

Ease in fullness in hems of shaped skirts.

When a facing extends through a hem, usually the hem is made first, then the facing is folded back over the hem.



Underlining

Garment and lining fabrics treated as one and sewed in with regular seamlines.

Excellent for *shape retention* and cushioning seams.

Partial underlining in skirt back should extend well below hip-line.

Lining

Made separate and then attached.

Gives good inside appearance.

May eliminate need of slip when used in dress or skirt.

Lining seams and hem should be turned toward the body — if there is danger of seam imprint on top side.

The choice to line, to underline, or to use a combination of both — is determined by the characteristics of the garment and lining fabrics and the effect you are trying to get.